

Message Text

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TO USINT BAGHDAD PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 212575

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, UNGA, RQ, IZ

SUBJ: PUERTO RICO IN THE COMMITTEE OF 24

REF: BAGHDAD 1698

1. WE APPRECIATE THE EFFORT YOU HAVE MADE IN YOUR CONVERSATION WITH KETTANEH AND BELIEVE THAT THE SUBSTANCE OF THAT CONVERSATION, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ISSUE MERITS A FURTHER EFFORT ON YOUR PART TO PERSUADE THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT TO CHANGE ITS POSITION ON PUERTO RICO. IN YOUR FURTHER CONVERSATIONS, YOU SHOULD EMPHASIZE THAT THIS QUESTION IS OF CONCERN TO THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE US GOVERNMENT AND THAT WE HOPE THAT IRAQ WILL BEAR THAT FACT IN MIND IN FURTHER CONSIDERING ITS POSITION.

2. ON THE MERITS OF THE QUESTION ITSELF, YOU SHOULD EMPHASIZE THE FOLLOWING:

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--THE PRESIDENT'S PROCLAMATION HAS MADE CLEAR THE WILLINGNESS OF THE UNITED STATES TO SUPPORT THE EXPRESSED VIEWS OF THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO.

--PUERTO RICO ALLOWS OPEN POLITICAL DEBATE AND ACTIVITY BY ALL POLITICAL MOVEMENTS, WITH FREE AND DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS. FOR THE COMMITTEE OF 24 TO DECIDE THAT

PUERTO RICO BELONGS ON A LIST OF NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES WOULD BE TANTAMOUNT TO SAYING THAT THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO ARE NOT ABLE TO EXPRESS THEIR OWN VIEWS FREELY ON THE ISSUE OF STATUS. SUCH A CONCLUSION FLIES IN THE FACE OF THE HISTORY AND POLITICS OF PUERTO RICO OVER THE PAST FEW DECADES, INCLUDING REPEATED FREE ELECTIONS, THE CURRENT GOVERNOR'S CALL FOR A 1981 STATUS REFERENDUM, AND PRESIDENT CARTER'S PLEDGE TO SUPPORT WHATEVER RESULT THE PUERTO RICANS CHOOSE.

--IRAQ SHOULD CONSIDER CAREFULLY WHETHER ITS NON-ALIGNED POSITION DOES NOT MITIGATE AGAINST SUPPORT OF THE THESIS PRESSED BY THOSE OPPOSED TO THE US THAT PUERTO RICO IS A COLONY, 25 YEARS AFTER THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DETERMINED THAT THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO EXERCISED THEIR RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION.

3. WE BELIEVE THAT KETTANEH'S SUGGESTION THAT WE EXPRESS WILLINGNESS TO LET THE UN OBSERVE A REFERENDUM IS PREMATURE. YOU SHOULD TELL HIM, HOWEVER, THAT IF THE GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO SHOULD IN FUTURE DECIDE IN FAVOR OF THE UN OBSERVING A REFERENDUM IN PUERTO RICO, WE FORESEE NO REASON WHY OUR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD OPPOSE THIS.

4. AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THESE FACTORS -- AND
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CONSIDERING AS WELL THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL VIEW ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE OF 24 AS PROPOSED BY CUBA AS INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE UNITED STATES AND PUERTO RICO -- WE URGE THAT IRAQ CONSIDER ITS OWN NATIONAL INTERESTS IN THIS MATTER. CONSEQUENTLY, WE URGE THAT IRAQ VOTE IN SUPPORT OF FURTHER DEFERRAL BY THE COMMITTEE OF 24.

CHRISTOPHER

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